

Erie Arts & Culture IMPACT REPORT

Q3 | SEPT 2020

Patrick Fisher
Executive Director



Navigating 2020 has been fraught with challenges. But, in every challenge lies an opportunity. As an agency, we've had to wrestle with funding constraints and disruptions to operations. However, as a team, we've used this as an opportunity to evolve and innovate. At the executive level, we continue to push boundaries and set examples for inclusivity, while also being focused on our solvency. I believe that what's included in our Q3 Impact Report reflects our commitment to those priorities.

Erie Arts & Culture is examining its operating budget under the constraints of the pandemic. When reviewing our options, we are identifying areas where costs can be reduced without having an impact on our commitment and service to the community. As a staff, we've worked remotely since the middle of March and we've found that our productivity and workflow has actually improved. As a result, we have opted to not renew the lease to our office building at the conclusion of the calendar year and we will continue to work as a remote office. This decision will help the agency **save approximately 20% off our annual operating budget.**

In July, Erie Arts & Culture worked with Erie-based philanthropist Blossom McBrier to update the McBrier Family Memorial Fund within the Erie Arts Endowment. The named fund was established in 1998 in remembrance of James R. McBrier. Originally established as a donor advised fund, the newly executed agreement updates the fund to be unrestricted. **The purpose of the McBrier Family Memorial Fund is to support the creative arts and music performances in Erie County.** Blossom also updated an endowment managed by the Erie Community Foundation to have the annual interest benefit Erie Arts & Culture's Ignite Arts grant program.

Also in July, Erie Arts & Culture welcomed our newest **Trustee to the Board, Dr. Rhonda Matthews.** Dr. Matthews is an Associate Professor of History, Politics, Languages and Cultures at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. She is also one of the founders of Erie's Black Wall Street.

At the end of August, **Judy Bloeser retired from her role as Office Administrator with Erie Arts & Culture.** Judy was hired in 2015 and had worked under the guidance and direction of two different Executive Directors, myself included, and one Interim Director. During her tenure with the agency, Judy kept the wheels of the

office turning. She was the first point of contact for many of our visitors, vendors, and donors - as well as our staff and Board of Trustees. I know that I couldn't have acclimated to my position as quickly as I did in September 2018 if it were not for the support and assistance of Judy. I thank Judy for her dedication to advancing Erie Arts & Culture's mission and believing in our work.

We are working diligently to continue to advance equity within the cultural and creative sector. In September, Erie Arts & Culture received a **\$5,000 grant from Highmark Health to promote inclusion and equity across the non-profit cultural sector.** To assist in this work, Erie Arts & Culture will contract with a national consultant who specializes in dismantling white supremacy and advancing cultural equity in the arts. The objective is to provide training to leaders in the sector and then collaboratively develop a sector-wide DEI plan.

I want to thank everyone for their continued support of Erie Arts & Culture. 2020 has proven to be an unsettling and difficult year to navigate. But, we continue to move forward in our mission thanks in large part to the generous support of our donors and funders. I also want to take a moment and sincerely thank Chanel, Jade, Kristen, and Kelly for their great work and continued commitment to leveraging the power of the arts and humanities to address the vital needs and interests of the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Patrick Fisher in black ink. The signature is stylized and cursive, with the first name 'Patrick' being more prominent than the last name 'Fisher'.

Patrick Fisher
Executive Director



Thank you for your generosity.



We thank everyone who supported Erie Arts & Culture during Erie Gives.

This year, we received contributions from 164 donors. This signifies 124.66% growth from the 73 donors who we received gifts from in 2019. We welcomed 64 new donors to Erie Arts & Culture through this year's campaign. We also had a retention rate of 69.9% from our 2019 campaign. 16 donors increased their 2019 contributions by 25% or more.

We raised **\$125,467** on Erie Gives. After credit card processing fees and receiving a prorated match from the Erie Community Foundation, EAC cleared **\$133,895.65**. These funds will be harnessed to support specific programs and our general operations. Thanks to the Board of Directors of the stARTup Incubator, a sub-fund has been established within the Erie Arts Endowment in the amount of **\$92,000** to benefit EAC's PRO Network and CHROMA Guild.

Coming up next

FOOD ACCESS & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Public Art Project

The Whole Foods Co-op has raised \$6,925 thanks to the Board of Directors, staff, and member-owners to fund a mural initiative on the market's exterior facade. The mural will be designed and painted by artists Leslie Sotomayor, Caesar Westbrook, and Antonio Howard - all members of the CHROMA Guild. The mural will explore the intersection between food access and social justice. Additionally, thanks to Brian and Linda Graff, \$5,000 will support a new public art initiative in the City of Erie led by members of the CHROMA Guild, additional details forthcoming.





I recently noticed that we are approaching the publication of our 200th blog post. I could hardly believe we're nearing this milestone, especially because our website is not yet even two years old! We've shared a lot of content with the world since launching our rebuilt site.

It makes sense, though. There is a lot of content to share about the creative and cultural sector in our region. Each day on the job, I have the pleasure of learning about something or someone remarkable in our sector.

It's been nine months since I've joined Erie Arts & Culture as the Creative Director. Working in this sector has been such a pleasure. One of my responsibilities is to design the quarterly Impact Report. Seeing everything come together in this report brings light to my world, which is valued since the nation is in such distress.

One of the most rewarding projects I've worked on during the third quarter was the Virtual Youth Gallery, which launched on September 1, 2020. The online gallery includes works from local students who created art in response to the question "How are you feeling?" As you browse the gallery, which can be found at the link above, you'll find an array of concerns, insight, and empathy from our youth.

This quarter, I've also enjoyed working on marketing collateral for our visiting artist in residence program, the CHROMA Guild, public art projects, such as the Manus Sunoco Mural, and Erie Gives.

This summer I had the assistance of a marketing intern, Natalia Buczek. We bid farewell to Natalia in August. One task Natalia tackled during her internship was beginning to optimize our online artist directory. She worked diligently, one-on-one, with many artists to help them create captivating and informative directory profiles. She also worked to optimize the functionality of the directory.

This quarter, we also welcomed a fall intern, Megan Seigfried, who is a senior Professional Writing major at Mercyhurst University. One project that Megan has assisted with is writing narratives to support an upcoming public art project, the Discovery Trail.

Sincerely,
Jade Mitchell
Creative Director

*Thank you, Natalia,
and best wishes!*

Manus Sunoco Mural

Honoring Luther Manus, Jr.

In August, Erie Arts & Culture announced a new mural project at Manus Sunoco, located at 26 E 12th Street. The project was developed to honor the life and legacy of Luther Manus, who turns 93 on October 10, 2020. To design and paint the mural, Erie Arts & Culture commissioned artists Antonio Howard and Ceasar Westbrook, two members of the CHROMA Guild.

Erie Arts & Culture seeded \$3,200 in funding from Erie Insurance and the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development from the Neighborhood Assistance Program. Sherwin-Williams Commercial Paint Store, located at 1815 Peach Street, provided all the materials and supplies in-kind. Luther and Connie Manus then helped Erie Arts & Culture raise additional funds, garnering more than \$7,000 in donations from 140+ individuals and businesses.

On September 20, the mural was unveiled to the community during a dedication ceremony. As part of the ceremony, Mayor Joseph Schember issued a proclamation declaring October 10, Luther's birthday, Luther R. Manus Jr. Day in the City of Erie, in perpetuity. During the ceremony, Denise, one of Luther's daughters, shared her perspective that the project reinvigorated her father and filled him with life.

It was a privilege and an honor for Erie Arts & Culture to bring this project to fruition. The mural project shows what can be accomplished through investments in the arts. A pillar in our community has been recognized and publically honored. Two artists of color have been paid for their talent and work. Youth in the community received opportunities to volunteer and learn about public art. And, a gateway property in Downtown Erie has been dramatically enhanced. Make no mistake, the arts are a powerful tool that can fuel social change.





The coronavirus has undoubtedly uprooted long established educational habits, daily routines and traditional norms. The pandemic reminds us of the value of a well-rounded education – one integrated with arts and humanities. Multiple pivots have illustrated the importance of critical and creative thinking, and flexibility and adaptability have re-emerged as necessary skills. Our programming team, along with our teaching artists, embrace this new educational landscape – knowing that the arts will aid in surviving, recovering and thriving in the face of adversity.

Sincerely,
Chanel Cook
Director of Programs and Community Relations



"There is so much to learn about virtual teaching; how it impacts students and how to adjust residencies for technology – and most importantly, the students. We are concerned with reaching them, helping them understand what we are teaching through a screen – particularly, 3-D art. In preparation to become a teaching artist, virtual learning has been a challenge for me – as an adult.

I currently teach private wood carving as well. Behind the scenes, we must learn how to use additional technology that is not traditionally in the classroom – cameras, cables, lighting options, consistent work space and backgrounds. Being understanding and accommodating is important. Sharing what I learn with the students and witnessing their achievements is the most satisfying part of the process."

-Fredy Huaman Mallqui

Woodworker

Arts in Lifelong Learning: Virtual Rostered Teaching Artist Panel (a first for EAC!) Chanel Cook & Kristen Weibel

Dealing with the uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus pandemic has compelled all sectors to adapt and adjust. Although it has altered the landscape of education - from classroom learning to distance learning, we know learning through the arts establishes and reinforces the soft skills necessary to live an enriched life in today's ever-changing world.

Erie Arts & Culture envisions a region where every person has access to meaningful experiences that utilize the arts as a tool for personal development, both in academic and communal environments.

Erie Arts & Culture is the Region 1 partner with the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, administering an Arts in Education (AIE) program. As the partner, we leverage funds provided by the Commonwealth to support in-depth arts experiences for youth and adults within six counties of Northwestern Pennsylvania, including: Erie, Crawford, Mercer, Venango, Warren, and Lawrence.

Each year, we are responsible for seeking new applicants to serve as rostered teaching artists. An integral component of the AIE program, the role of a Teaching Artist is to lead an engaging experience in creativity and imagination while enriching the learning experience during a residency with a host site. These talented, practicing artists represent all disciplines; visual, performing, literary, and media arts.

In addition to representing multiple art forms, Erie Arts & Culture must build a roster that is inclusive - inviting and welcoming artists of color to the AIE program - implementing equity across all creative opportunities.

In addition to diversifying the roster, Erie Arts & Culture built a diverse, independent panel of practicing artists across the region, to recommend new artists to the roster. The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts' guidelines require that the panel select artists with exceptional portfolios and strong resumes, as well as strong teaching skills and experience, to participate in the AIE program.

The panelists reviewed each application and portfolio of work, and interviewing each applicant. Panelists gained clarification of the artists' methods, practices and techniques they use when teaching. Upon arriving at a consensus, they made recommendations to Erie Arts & Culture.



Marquis Wallace

Dancer, Visual Artist, & Writer

This year, Erie Arts & Culture is proud to add new and diverse artists to the roster, whose preferred art forms range from woodcarving to language and performing arts. The artists include: Walter Ang, Fredy Huaman Mallqui, Danielle Samone Johnson, Marquis Wallace and Ceasar Westbrook.

Each approved applicant successfully completed a five-session virtual orientation and training, and will shadow an established, practicing teaching artist for three to five residency days.

These virtual sessions provided artists a lived experience similar to that of their future students - Google Classroom - and required them to transition to a new normal. Each was required to complete and submit assignments online and deliver presentations - virtually.

This experience has highlighted the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to teaching — integrating math, science, reading into arts and vice versa. It further introduces challenges and opportunities to be more creative than ever before.

This is what arts education is all about; it is about reimagining, thinking critically and creatively, including all. Teaching students to be flexible, resilient, dependable, and inclusive.

A well rounded education cannot exist without arts in education.

Capacity Building: Ignite Arts Grants (Formerly EAE Small Project Grants)

Erie Arts & Culture recently reimagined the formerly known Erie Arts Endowment Small Project Grants to the new Ignite Arts Grants, signifying how Erie Arts Endowment funds are utilized by the community to spark the start of something that has the potential to become larger one day.

Erie Arts & Culture is currently accepting proposals for our 2020 Ignite Arts Grants. Ignite Arts Grants are designed to provide up to \$2,500 in financial support to a variety of arts, cultural and heritage activities to help strengthen the vibrancy and vitality of the Erie Region and enrich the lives of our residents.

Proposals for Erie Arts & Culture Ignite Arts Grants are accepted once per year. Complete proposals are evaluated by a volunteer panel based on the following criteria: Project Quality, Community Engagement and Impact, and Management. Final funding decisions are made by the Erie Arts & Culture Board of Trustees.

Categories include: Bold & Innovative, Preserve or Promote Cultural Diversity and Building Relationships with New or Under-Resourced Communities

To support an enriched life for all, Erie Arts & Culture commits to championing policies and practices of cultural equity that empower a just, inclusive, and equitable region. We believe that equity is crucial to the long-term viability of both the arts and culture sector and communities-at-large. In support of this commitment, our grant categories have been aligned to reflect the values and strategic priorities of Erie Arts & Culture.

Grants are made possible by contributions made to the Erie Arts Endowment, Arts and Culture Campaign, and special events like Erie Gives Day. Projects which involve music performance and arts education have an enhanced pool of funds available thanks to donors who wished to ensure that these specific activities thrive in Erie County.

The Erie Arts & Culture Board of Trustees voted, during a special meeting in July 2020, to align our grant categories to reflect the values and strategic priorities of the organization. This includes Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). Applicants will be asked to assess what DEI means when applied to the organization's mission, vision, and values.



The application opened September 15 and will close on **November 6, 2020.**

Organizations may apply for projects occurring January 1 - December 31, 2021.



Traditional Artists Collaborate Across Disciplines at the Erie Blues & Jazz Festival

Kelly Armor

Ten traditional artists shared their work at the 28th Annual Erie Blues & Jazz Festival in August. Because of COVID, WQLN live streamed the entire festival on the internet, radio, and television. The festival hosted the African gospel music of David Kambowa, the traditional Guinean music of Tasana Camara, and a Sudanese bridal henna demonstration by Nialwak Athow and Ashol Akol.

In addition, the festival premiered two multi-disciplinary works. EAC Folk Art Director Kelly Armor explained, **"Normally artists meet other artists at the festival, and new relationships are kindled. This year, we had no in-person audience, restricted personnel on-site, and fewer hours of programming. We decided to jumpstart those relationships by asking some artists to collaborate."**

Turkish calligrapher Benjamin Aysan teamed up with spoken word artist Samone (above). She recited her poem, Window Lantern, while Benjamin amplified selected words with calligraphy. **"This was the first time for me to perform live, and to work with a poet. It was so hard but an honor for me,"** said Aysan. Samone added, **"I loved his care and precision. It was more than aesthetics; he brought his whole past and his people to the process."**

Palestinian singer Nibal Abd El Karim sang a song she learned from the legendary singer Umm Kulthum while Zoey Crenshaw added a counterpart of modern dance. Crenshaw said, **"This felt like a once-in-a-lifetime chance to work with someone with a similar mind but a different culture."**

Karim added, **"It was a nice blending of cultures, like a traditional dish with new spices. Zoey was amazing. Her dance and my voice were completely connected. She did not need to know Arabic because she felt the meaning."** WQLN reports that over 34,000 people tuned into the festival via Facebook, TV, or radio.

Support for this project was provided in part by a grant from the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art.



Hiromi Moneyhun

Residency Recap

Japanese papercut (kirie) artist Hiromi Moneyhun recently spent three weeks living and working in Erie, Pennsylvania. Hiromi's stay was part of a visiting artist residency program launched by Erie Arts & Culture in early 2020, in collaboration with Long Road Projects.

Through this program, Erie Arts & Culture and Long Road Projects provide contemporary artists with dedicated time and space to reflect, research, and create new bodies of work – outside of their usual environments. This program also creates opportunities for new perspectives and creative processes to be shared, which in turn positively impacts the cultural and creative landscape in Northwestern Pennsylvania. Hiromi's residency started on August 17 and extended to September 10.

An accomplished papercut artist, Hiromi was interested in using her residency to explore new mediums and disciplines, including printmaking, papermaking, ceramics, and public art.

We summed up Hiromi's four week visit in our blog post below. Included are photo galleries and descriptions of each collaboration.



LONG ROAD PROJECTS



Next Visiting Artist:

Sharon Norwood

October 5 – 24

Sharon Norwood is an interdisciplinary artist whose work spans several media, including painting and ceramics. Sharon received her BFA in painting from the University of South Florida. She received her MFA in studio arts from Florida State University. Sharon's work has been exhibited in several biennials including the Jamaica, Atlanta and Florida Biennial. Her work has been exhibited in Florida, Georgia, Baltimore, Kansas City, Washington, New York, Canada, South Korea, Jamaica, and Germany. Sharon maintains her studio practice in Savannah, Georgia.





Sudanese Henna Mural Kelly Armor

Thanks to a generous grant from the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, Lake Erie International Market now sports a mural based on henna designs. Many traditional cultures use henna to adorn a bride's hands and feet for her wedding night and women, once married, use henna to mark any special occasion. The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts recognized Nialwak Athow as a master henna artist in 2018. Jennifer Peters and three other artists who recently created the mural on 7th and State Street celebrating women's right to vote, mentored Athow.

Peters states, **"This was an amazing opportunity to assist and celebrate a New American woman artist while creating public art in our home of Erie. I hope when other women artists see her mural, they too feel empowered and part of a real collective. We are here to support one another."** Athow created the design and Peters and others helped her scale it up, paint it, and affix it to the building.

EAC Folk Art Director Kelly Armor reports, **"Athow was completely undaunted. She has never painted or created public art, but she threw herself into the process. She watched her mentors very closely yet remained very decisive about her artistic decisions."**

Athow is pleased how it communicates her bold African style. **"Henna, to us, means happiness. We love henna. It is good to show our culture on a building!"**

The market is located at the corner of Brown Avenue and Cherry Street, and is owned by Sheikh Abdalla, a local Imam and immigrant from Sudan. He says, **"My store helps people keep their culture with ethnic food. So I was excited when Nialwak first asked me. It is beautiful."**

2020

Erie Arts & Culture APPRECIATION AWARDS



Nominations are now open!

The deadline to nominate is November 12, 2020.

For more than three decades, the Arts and Culture Appreciation Awards have recognized and honored those individuals, businesses, and organizations who use arts-based disciplines or deliver cultural programming to positively impact the Erie community. Continuing in this tradition, we are asking that you please participate in the nomination process. It is through your participation that we identify those within the community who represent the spirit of these awards. We will honor this year's honorees virtually.

There are five award categories and nominees may be businesses, organizations, foundations, groups, or individuals. Nominations must address the criteria outlined for that particular award. A panel of volunteers will objectively review each submission based on the quality of the information provided with each nomination.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award

This award recognizes and celebrates organizations or individuals that have embraced diversity and inclusion as part of their core values and are committed to producing programs or environments where all persons and perspectives are welcomed and valued.

Leadership Award

The Leadership Award recognizes a business, government, or foundation that has either 1) demonstrated long term support for arts and culture, 2) significantly integrated arts and culture into their workplace, 3) collaborated with arts and cultural organizations or individual artists to serve the community, or 4) encouraged employees to serve as Board members or volunteers with arts and culture organizations.

Applause Award

The Applause Award recognizes a dedicated individual, or group of individuals, who demonstrate a long-term commitment to either service or support of the arts and culture sector by being a reoccurring volunteer with, or donor of, an arts and culture organization or an arts and culture related event in our community.

Imagine Award

The Imagine Award recognizes an educator or instructor whose efforts have made an outstanding contribution to the community by using arts and culture in an educational setting to inspire and empower their students.

Bruce Morton Wright Artist of the Year Award

The Artist of the Year Award recognizes an individual artist of any media who is process-oriented and has served as an influencer or mentor in Erie's arts and culture community.



Support Arts & Humanities within Erie's Urban Core

Erie Arts & Culture and its Cultural Service Partners announce the 2020 United Arts Fund, which started on September 1 and continues through December 31, 2020. This year's collective fundraising campaign has a weighted degree of importance, as non-profit cultural organizations have experienced severe disruptions to their operations and revenue during the public health pandemic. Social distancing requirements have made it all but impossible for cultural organizations to awe and inspire the community through traditional arts in education, exhibition, and performance models. Since March 2020, it's estimated that non-profit cultural organizations in Erie County have suffered an economic loss totaling more than \$3.9 million due to the disruption of standard business operations. Very little economic relief has been directed to these organizations.

The United Arts Fund, which launched in 1967, provides Erie Arts & Culture's five Cultural Service Partners, including the Erie Philharmonic, the Erie Playhouse, the expERIENCE Children's Museum, the Flagship Niagara League, and the Hagen History Center, with unrestricted funds to support their operations and advance their missions. A percentage of the annual fund drive also supports Erie Arts & Culture's Ignite Arts grant program, which provides funding to arts-based projects in Erie County. The purpose of the Ignite Arts Grants

is to support projects that are bold and innovative, build relationships with new and under-resourced communities, and preserve and promote cultural diversity.

The 2019 United Arts Fund raised a combined total of \$678,164.62, a record amount for the fund drive. Of that total, \$137,725 was secured by Erie Arts & Culture from corporate citizens, the agency's long-term donors, and Anchor Investors. 60% of that total provided the five participating Cultural Service Partners with a prorated match based on the total dollars they each raised. In total, the Cultural Service Partners collectively raised **\$540,439.62**, with more than 800 donors contributing to the fund drive.

2020 GOALS

Erie Insurance has already pledged \$125,000 in support of the 2020 United Arts Fund. Their contribution does come with a caveat. To earn that pledge, the campaign must reach a minimum fundraising goal of **\$500,000**. Please consider making a gift to the 2020 United Arts Fund. You can make a donation to Erie Arts & Culture, which benefits our agency, all five Cultural Service Partners, and the Ignite Arts grant program. Or, you can make a contribution directly to either one or several of the Cultural Service Partners of your choosing.





Check Form

Please make checks payable to Erie Arts & Culture (23 West 10th Street, Suite 2, Erie, PA 16501) and include "UAF" in the memo line. Please ensure checks are mailed with this completed form before December 31, 2020.

DONOR INFORMATION:

Donor Name(s):

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Phone:

Email Address:

Contribution total:

Please list how you wish to be identified:

Does your employer match donations? Yes No

Please note, the employee is responsible for completing the employer's company match paperwork.

Company Name:

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO DONATE?

General UAF with standard distribution:

Or a gift directly to:

Amount:

Erie Arts & Culture

Erie Philharmonic

Erie Playhouse

expERIENCE Children's Museum

Flagship Niagara League

Hagen History Center

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Erie Arts & Culture
The collective voice for a vibrant region

